

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1 to 15 and 23 to 29 without prejudice, and amend the claims as follows:

1 to 15 (canceled).

16. (currently amended) A method for producing an optical component of quartz glass, said method comprising:

elongating a coaxial arrangement of a core rod and a hollow cylinder of a predetermined length,

wherein the arrangement is supplied in vertical orientation to a heating zone and is softened therein zonewise, starting with a lower end thereof, and the component is drawn off downwards from a softened region of the arrangement,

the hollow cylinder having an inner bore that is provided with a constriction in the region of its lower end on which the core rod is supported, and

wherein a raw cylinder is provided which is longer than the hollow cylinder to be elongated,

the method further comprising mechanically machining the raw cylinder **so that the raw cylinder has** ~~having~~ a bore that is mechanically machined to a final dimension, and

wherein the raw cylinder bore is heated in a collapsing zone spaced apart from a front end of the raw cylinder at a distance corresponding at least to the length of the hollow cylinder so that the raw cylinder is collapsed in part, and

wherein the hollow cylinder is subsequently separated in the region of the collapsing zone.

17. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the raw cylinder consists of at least two start cylinders connected to each other at the front end and joined in the region of an attachment zone in the form of a joint, and wherein the step of heating and partial collapsing of the raw cylinder is carried out in the area of the attachment zone.
18. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the start cylinders has a reduced wall thickness in the region of the attachment zone.
19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the region of reduced wall thickness is configured as a conical taper.
20. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the raw cylinder is softened in vertical orientation, is suspended in an annular heating element in the region of the collapsing zone and is elongated under the action of its own weight.
21. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the raw cylinder has a cylindrical outer jacket which prior to heating and collapsing in the region of the collapsing zone is provided with a radially surrounding notch.

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein a negative pressure relative to a pressure externally applied to a cylindrical outer surface of the raw cylinder is produced in a bore therein during the collapsing.

23 to 29 (canceled).